

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended for clarity and the specification is amended to correct minor informalities found therein. For example, the heading "Summary of the Invention" is deleted and a new heading "Summary" is inserted before paragraph [0009] on page 3 of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,851,376 to Asami et al. (Asami) when taken with U.S. Patent No. 4,486,934 to Reed and U.S. Patent No. 5,552,351 to Anderson et al. (Anderson). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action cites Reed and Anderson as evidence that the reclaimed unfired and dried material of Asami is equivalent to a material of a green body. Applicants respectfully disagree with this generalization of Asami's reclaimed cordierite composition. For example, Reed describes that the extrudate emerges from the discharge side of the die as a long, unfired ("green") body (col. 1, lines 39-40 of Reed). The unfired, green body described by Reed is the extrudable material that is a mixture of materials, such as clay, talc, and alumina and is fired to form cordierite or other heat resistant ceramic (col. 1, lines 18-21 of Reed). Thus, the extrudable material of Reed is not a crushed green body as recited in claim 1.

Anderson describes that the suspension is applied to the membrane in liquid form using a pipet, and then dried to form a green body (col. 4, lines 53-55). After drying, the ceramic powder green body may be fired at a temperature that sinters the powder and permits the membrane fibers to bind to the mechanical support (col. 4, lines 55-61 of Anderson). Accordingly, the green body described by Anderson is a dried green body and not a crushed green body as recited in claim 1.

Contrary to the Office Action assertion, the dried green body of Asami does not correspond to the crushed green body as recited in claim 1. That is, the dried, unfired

reclaimed material of Asami is not a crushed green body having the substantially same composition as the compounded mixture for forming the green body, the crushed green body is an undried formed material, as recited in claim 1.

Instead, the dried, unfired scrap used as the reclaimed cordierite composition of Asami is a mixture having a chemical composition similar to a conventionally used cordierite composition, which contains talc, caolin, calcined kaolin, alumina and other materials (col. 4, lines 49-54 of Asami). The process for producing a cordierite ceramic body as taught by Asami uses the reclaimed cordierite composition for a cordierite ceramic article (Abstract). As Asami describes, a starting material or a portion of the starting material is a dried, unfired rejection of a cordierite composition, which is recovered during production of a cordierite ceramic article similar to the cordierite ceramic body (col. 2, lines 49-56 of Asami). Accordingly, Asami uses a dried, unfired reclaimed material and not a crushed green body that is an undried formed material, as recited in claim 1.

Further, although the scrap material of Asami is crushed into pieces of about 50 mm (col. 8, lines 12-17), the scrap material is not a crushed green body having substantially same composition as the compounded mixture for forming the green body. Instead, the scrap material processed during the crushing operation of Asami is the reclaimed cordierite composition having the cordierite reaction ration R of 0.3 or less, (col. 8, lines 12-44). That is, the reaction ration R of the cordierite batch composition of the starting material is 0.3 or less (col. 3, lines 4-20).

Thus, Asami does not disclose a process for producing a formed honeycomb body wherein there is added in a predetermined amount, to the raw material for forming the honeycomb body structure, a powdery material obtained by crushing, into a maximum particle diameter of 50 mm or smaller, a crushed green body having substantially same composition as the compounded mixture for forming the green body, and a resulting mixture

is mixed thoroughly by the mixer to obtain the compounded mixture for forming the green body, as recited in claim 1.

Also, in Background of the Application, Applicants describe the process of Asami (paragraph [0005]; page 2). Further, as described in paragraph [0006], unlike the case where the above-mentioned dried formed material was used (e.g., the process of Asami), there are problems when a green body such as undried formed material is reused for a raw material for forming a honeycomb body structure (paragraph [0006], page 2). Since a green body contains water of about 20% by mass and has a high viscosity; when the green body is added into an ordinary raw material for forming a honeycomb body structure used in the form of dried powder, the green body becomes lumps of about fist-size and only a compounded mixture for forming a green body is obtained wherein the raw material for forming a honeycomb body structure in the green body are mixed in a non-uniform state (paragraph [0008], pages 2-3). As further described, rejected products of undried formed material are still being disposed as a waste (paragraph [0008], page 3). Applicants' process for forming a honeycomb structure as recited in claim 1 addresses this problem. Asami does not.

Accordingly, Asami does not disclose each and every feature of Applicants' claimed invention as recited in claim 1 and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 is inappropriate. Further, for the reasons discussed, Asami does not suggest the features as recited in claim 1.

Because Asami does not anticipate or suggest the features of claim 1, Asami cannot possibly anticipate or suggest the subject matter of claim 2, which depends from claim 1, for the reasons discussed with respect to claim 1 and for the additional features recited therein. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 3-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Asami when taken with Reed and Anderson. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

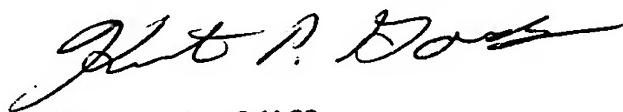
As discussed above, the green body described by Asami is a dried, unfired reclaimed material and does not correspond to the crushed green body as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Asami fails to overcome its own deficiencies as applied to claim 1.

Because Asami does not disclose or suggest the subject matter as recited in claim 1, Asami cannot render obvious the subject matter of claim 1. Further, at least for the reasons discussed with respect to claim 1, as well as for the additional features recited, claims 3-10, which depend from claim 1, are also not rendered obvious by Asami. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-10 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination

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